



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT OFFICE
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, Oregon 97504
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1792(117)

Rogue River Fuels Reduction Project

G6227(DH:cb)

FEB 06 2003

Dear Neighbor and Interested Citizen:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has begun planning a fire hazard reduction project within the boundary of the Hellgate Recreation Section of the Rogue National Wild and Scenic River. A map outlining the project area is enclosed. The impetus for this project is our recognition that the forest fuels have been increasing on lands within the corridor for many years.

The risk of high intensity wildfire has consequently increased as has the potential for property damage and the potential for the loss of some special river values should a wildfire occur. These risks, and the potential consequences, have been underscored by the large wildfires of the past several years, particularly, the Biscuit Fire last summer. The impetus also comes from the development of the National Fire Plan and the President's Healthy Forest Initiative, both of which emphasize the need and urgency for this type of project.

Our planning strategy for this project is to prepare a corridor-wide plan that will set the stage and clearly state the planning sideboards and define the range of potential fuel reduction treatments. Many of these sideboards, as well as management objectives, have already been set by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Medford District 1995 Resource Management Plan, and the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan. We will not propose changes to these sideboards, but will work within the range of flexibility they offer. After completing the corridor wide plan, we will work closely with individual neighborhoods to prepare and implement focused neighborhood fuel reduction project plans.

This project is one of the ten initially selected Healthy Forest Initiative pilot projects in which there is an emphasis on streamlining our planning process. We intend to complete the corridor-wide plan and two neighborhood plans so that on-the-ground work can begin later this year.

Our biggest challenge as we prepare and implement a fuel hazard reduction plan for the Hellgate Recreation Section is to determine how to effectively reduce the fire hazard in the project area while meeting the special management objectives of the congressionally designated National Wild and Scenic River, particularly the scenic aspects of the corridor. To help us with this, we would like to hear your views about how to meet both objectives and also about any other significant issues you think should be considered and addressed.

Our goal is to design a project that will be effective in reducing the potential for damage to property or scenic qualities should a wildfire occur. While we will look at all of the lands within the designated boundary from the perspective of current fire hazard conditions, our focus will be on the vegetation on BLM administered lands. We do hope that all private landowners will join us in addressing the fire hazard and pursue complimentary fire hazard reduction work on their land.

We will hold two open houses to scope the planning and analysis issues:

Tuesday, February 18, 2003, 5– 7 p.m., Galice Community Hall, Galice

Tuesday, February 25, 2003, 5:30– 8:30 p.m., Ann Basker Auditorium, Grants Pass

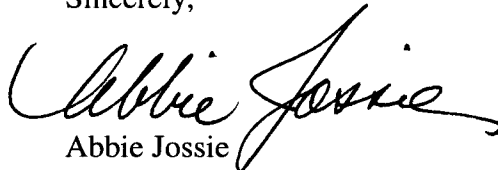
These open houses will provide opportunities for informal discussions with the BLM resource specialists who will be preparing the plans and treatment prescriptions. You may also leave written comments with us at that time or comments may be sent to me at the address on the letterhead.

Early comments are especially helpful to us. This is not, however, the only opportunity to comment on this project. Later, when we have completed the broad plan and an environmental assessment of the proposal, there will be an opportunity for review and comment.

If you would like to comment but would prefer to comment confidentially, you may request that we withhold your name and / or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. Please state this clearly at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All comments received from organizations or officials of organizations, businesses or government agencies will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

We appreciate your interest in the management of your public lands.

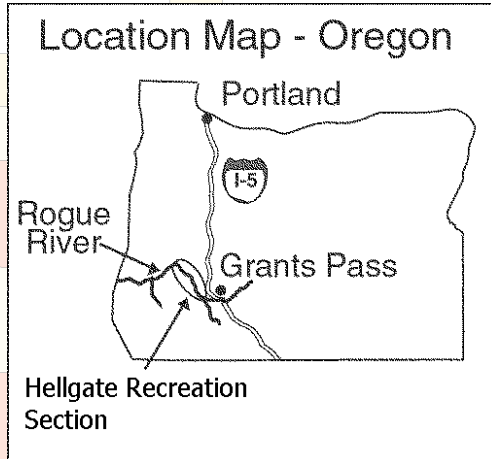
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abbie Jossie', written in a cursive style.

Abbie Jossie
Field Manager
Grants Pass Resource Area

Enclosure: Project location map

Rogue National Wild & Scenic River Hellgate Recreation Section Hazardous Fuel Reduction and Management Project



Legend

- Rogue River
- Major Roads
- Land Use Allocation**
 - Congressionally Reserved
 - Late-Succional Reserve
 - North Gen. Forest Mgt.
 - South Gen. Forest Mgt.
 - Other Fed., State, Co.
- Project Area**
 - Hellgate Rec. Section



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Location_map.mxd

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